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ON THE

# IMMENSITY

OF THE

# SUPREME BEING.

A

# POETICAL ESSAY.

By CHRISTOPHER SMART, M.A.
Fellow of *Pembroke-Hall* in the Univerſity of *Cambridge*.

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# A Clauſe of Mr. SEATON's Will,

## Dated *Oct.* 8. 1738.

*I Give my Kiſlinbury Eſtate to the Univerſity of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which ſhall be diſpoſed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Maſter of Clare Hall, and the Greek Profeſſor for the time being, or any two of them ſhall agree. Which three perſons aforeſaid ſhall give out a Subject, which Subject ſhall for the firſt Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and ſo the ſucceeding Years, till the Subject is exhauſted; and afterwards the Subject ſhall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of heart, &c. or whatever elſe may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Maſter of Clare Hall, and Greek Profeſſor to be moſt conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they ſhall yearly diſpoſe of the Rent of the above Eſtate to that Maſter of Arts, whoſe Poem on the Subject given ſhall be beſt approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in Engliſh, and to be printed; the expence of which ſhall be deducted out of the product of the Eſtate, and the reſidue given as a reward for the Compoſer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verſes.*

WE the underwritten, do aſſign Mr. SEATON's Reward to C. SMART M.A. for his Poem on *The Immenſity of the Supreme Being*, and direct the ſaid Poem to be printed, according to the tenor of the Will.

April 20. 1751.

*Edm. Keene* Vice-Chancellor.

*J. Wilcox* Maſter of Clare Hall.

ON THE

# IMMENSITY

OF THE

# SUPREME BEING.

ONCE more I dare to rouſe the ſounding ſtring
*The Poet of my God*—Awake my glory,
Awake my lute and harp—my ſelf ſhall wake,
Soon as the ſtately night-exploding bird
In lively lay ſings welcome to the dawn.

Liſt ye! how nature with ten thouſand tongues
Begins the grand thanksgiving, Hail, all hail,
Ye tenants of the foreſt and the field!

My

My fellow ſubjects of th' eternal King,
I gladly join your Mattins, and with you
Confeſs his preſence, and report his praiſe.
O Thou, who or the Lambkin, or the Dove
When offer'd by the lowly, meek, and poor,
Prefer'ſt to Pride's whole hecatomb, accept
This mean Eſſay, nor from thy treaſure-houſe
Of Glory' immenſe the Orphan's mite exclude.
What tho' th' Almighty's regal throne be rais'd
High o'er yon azure Heav'n's exalted dome
By mortal eye unken'd — where Eaſt nor Weſt
Nor South, nor bluſt'ring North has breath to blow;
Albeit He there with Angels, and with Saints
Hold conference, and to his radiant hoſt
Ev'n face to face ſtand viſibly confeſt:
Yet know that nor in Preſence or in Pow'r
Shines He leſs perfect here; 'tis Man's dim eye
That makes th' obſcurity. He is the ſame,
Alike in all his Univerſe the ſame.

Whether

Whether the mind along the ſpangled Sky
Meaſures her pathleſs walk, ſtudious to view
Thy works of vaſter fabrick, where the Planets
Weave their harmonious rounds, their march directing
Still faithful, ſtill inconſtant to the Sun;
Or where the Comet thro' ſpace infinite
(Tho' whirling worlds oppoſe and globes of fire)
Darts, like a javelin, to his deſtin'd goal.
Or where in Heav'n above the Heav'n of Heav'ns
Burn brighter Suns, and goodlier Planets roll
With Satellits more glorious—Thou art there.
Or whether on the Ocean's boiſt'rous back
Thou ride triumphant, and with out-ſtretch'd arm
Curb the wild winds and diſcipline the billows,
The ſuppliant Sailor finds Thee there, his chief,
His only help—When Thou rebuk'ſt the ſtorm—
It ceaſes—and the veſſel gently glides
Along the glaſſy level of the calm.

Oh!

Oh! cou'd I ſearch the boſom of the ſea,
Down the great depth deſcending; there thy works
Wou'd alſo ſpeak thy reſidence; and there
Wou'd I thy ſervant, like the ſtill profound,
Aſtoniſh'd into ſilence muſe thy praiſe!
Behold! behold! th' unplanted garden round
Of vegetable coral, ſea-flow'rs gay,
And ſhrubs of amber from the pearl-pav'd bottom
Riſe richly varied, where the finny race
In blithe ſecurity their gambols play:
While high above their heads Leviathan
The terror and the glory of the main
His paſtime takes with tranſport, proud to ſee
The ocean's vaſt dominion all his own.

Hence thro' the genial bowels of the earth
Eaſy may fancy paſs; till at thy mines
*Gani* or *Raolconda* ſhe arrive,
And from the adamant's imperial blaze
Form weak ideas of her maker's glory.

Next to *Pegu* or *Ceylon* let me rove,
Where the rich ruby (deem'd by Sages old
Of Sovereign virtue) ſparkles ev'n like *Sirius*
And bluſhes into flames. Thence will I go
To undermine the treaſure-fertile womb
Of the huge *Pyrenean*, to detect
The Agat and the deep-intrenched gem
Of kindred Jaſper—Nature in them both
Delights to play the Mimic on herſelf;
And in their veins ſhe oft pourtrays the forms
Of leaning hills, of trees erect, and ſtreams
Now ſtealing ſoftly on, now thund'ring down
In deſperate caſcade with flow'rs and beaſts
And all the living landſkip of the vale:
In vain thy pencil *Claudio*, or *Pouſſin*,
Or thine, immortal *Guido*, wou'd eſſay
Such ſkill to imitate—it is the hand
Of God himſelf—for God himſelf is there.

Hence with the aſcending ſprings let me advance,
Thro' beds of magnets, minerals and ſpar,
Up to the mountain's ſummit, there t' indulge
Th' ambition of the comprehenſive eye,
That dares to call th' Horizon all her own.
Behold the foreſt, and the expanſive verdure
Of yonder level lawn, whoſe ſmooth-ſhorn ſod
No object interrupts, unleſs the oak
His lordly head uprears, and branching arms
Extends—Behold in regal ſolitude,
And paſtoral magnificence he ſtands
So ſimple! and ſo great! the under-wood
Of meaner rank an awful diſtance keep.
Yet Thou art there, yet God himſelf is there
Ev'n on the buſh (tho' not as when to *Moſes*
He ſhone in burning Majeſty reveal'd)
Nathleſs conſpicuous in the Linnet's throat
Is his unbounded goodneſs—Thee her Maker,
Thee her Preſerver chants ſhe in her ſong;

While

While all the emulative vocal tribe
The grateful leſſon learn—no other voice
Is heard, no other ſound—for in attention
Buried, ev'n babbling *Echo* holds her peace,
Now from the plains, where th' unbounded proſpect
Gives liberty her utmoſt ſcope to range,
Turn we to yon encloſures, where appears
Chequer'd variety in all her forms,
Which the vague mind attract and ſtill ſuſpend
With ſweet perplexity. What are yon tow'rs
The work of lab'ring man and clumſy art
Seen with the ring-dove's neſt—on that tall beech
Her penſile houſe the feather'd Artiſt builds—
The rocking winds moleſt her not; for ſee,
With ſuch due poize the wond'rous fabrick's hung,
That, like the compaſs in the bark, it keeps
True to itſelf and ſtedfaſt ev'n in ſtorms.
Thou ideot that aſſerts, there is no God,
View and be dumb for ever —

Go bid *Vitruvius* or *Palladio* build
The bee his manſion, or the ant her cave—
Go call *Correggio*, or let *Titian* come
To paint the hawthorn's bloom, or teach the cherry
To bluſh with juſt vermilion—hence away—
Hence ye prophane! for God himſelf is here.
Vain were th' attempt, and impious to trace
Thro' all his works th' Artificer Divine—
And tho' nor ſhining ſun, nor twinkling ſtar
Bedeck'd the crimſon curtains of the ſky;
Tho' neither vegetable, beaſt, nor bird
Were extant on the ſurface of this ball,
Nor lurking gem beneath; tho' the great ſea
Slept in profound ſtagnation, and the air
Had left no thunder to pronounce its maker;
Yet man at home, within himſelf, might find
The Deity immenſe, and in that frame
So fearfully, ſo wonderfully made,
See and adore his providence and pow'r—

I ſee, and I adore—O God moſt bounteous!
O infinite of Goodneſs and of Glory!
The knee, that thou haſt ſhap'd, ſhall bend to Thee,
The tongue, which thou haſt tun'd, ſhall chant thy praiſe,
And, thine own image, the immortal ſoul,
Shall conſecrate herſelf to Thee for ever.

*FINIS.*

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By Mr. SMART.

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*Quin etiam Succos, atque auxiliantia Morbis,*
*Gramina; quo nimius ſtaret Medicamine Sanguis*
*Quid faciat Somnos, quid hiantia Vulnera claudat*
*Quæ Ferro cohibenda Lues, quæ cederet Herbis,*
*Edocuit.* —— Stat. Achil.

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